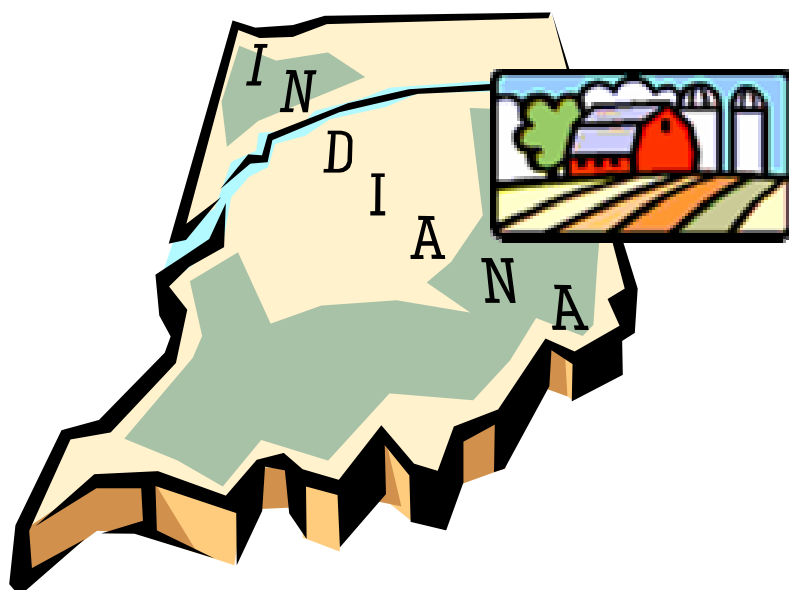


Indiana Farm and Ranch Lands Protection Program



FY 2004 Plan

USDA-NRCS
Indianapolis, Indiana
Updated: December 12, 2004

**Indiana
Farm and Ranch Lands Protection Program
FY 2004 Plan**

Table of Contents

Item	Page
Introduction	3
Indiana Technical Advisory Committee	
Purpose & Responsibilities	3
Indiana Technical Advisory Committee Structure	4
Current Protection Activities in Indiana	4
Proposed Protection Activities in Indiana	5
FY 2004 Basic Eligibility Requirements	5
FY 2004 Proposed Timeline	6
Farm and Ranch Lands Protection Program	
2004 Funding Request Indiana	7
Appendix A: Important Farmland Definitions	9
Appendix B: National Resource Inventory Data	9
Appendix C: Important Farmlands Acreage in Indiana	10

Indiana Farm and Ranch Lands Protection Program FY 2004 Plan

Introduction

Urban-suburban development has been a major contributor to the loss of farmland in Indiana. According to the National Resource Inventory (NRI), during the fifteen-year period from 1982 to 1997, Indiana urban-suburban development increased by 434,600 acres or 679 square miles, with most of the loss coming from farmland. About 68% of the state's soils are classified as "Prime or Important Farmland". Many counties have concern about the loss of prime farmland, but no major efforts have been undertaken in the past to protect it. National Resource Inventory data shows that over the last five years, we have lost an average of 3.5 square miles per month of prime farmland from rural areas. NRI data shows that Indiana is 4th highest in the nation in the percent of 1997 developed land that was prime farmland in 1992 and 7th in the U.S. in the average annual loss of prime farmland to development from 1992 - 1997. See Appendix A and B for more details concerning important farmlands.

The gross acreage of cropland converted to urban development is not necessarily the most troubling concern. A greater cause for concern is the pattern of growth that converts large acreages at very low densities. In addition, the remaining farmland is placed under greater environmental, economic, and social strain as agricultural and urbanizing interests compete.

Indiana Technical Advisory Committee Purpose & Responsibilities

The Indiana Farm and Ranch Lands Protection Technical Advisory Committee (IFPTAC) is a subgroup of the NRCS State Technical Committee. The Committee also functions as the Indiana Farm and Ranch Lands Protection Technical Advisory Committee of the Indiana Land Resources Council (ILRC). National guidelines on the make-up and function of this committee are contained in 7CFR Part 610, Subpart C, Section 610.21

The purpose of this committee is to provide recommendations, data and technical analysis pertaining to the administration of the Farm and Ranch Lands Protection Program (FRPP), and other local, state, and federal Farmland protection programs which reflect the professional information and judgement of the committee. Such information is provided in a manner that will assist in determining matters of fact, technical merit, or scientific question. Recommendations are provided to the NRCS State Conservationist and the Indiana Land Resources Council. Although the Farm and Ranch Lands Protection Advisory Committee has no implementation or enforcement authority, USDA shall give strong consideration to the committee's recommendations.

The specific responsibilities of the committee include, but are not limited to:

1. Establish ranking criteria and guidelines for FRPP proposals
2. Review the technical merits of proposals
3. Rank proposals and recommend FRPP and other program awards.
4. Provide advice on the development of the State FRPP Program Plan
5. Keep the NRCS State Technical Committee informed
6. Keep the Indiana Land Resource Council informed
7. Provide technical advisory leadership in other local, state, and federal programs assisting with Farm land protection
8. Assist in Farm and Ranch Lands Protection program(s) outreach

Indiana Technical Advisory Committee Structure

The Indiana FRPP Technical Advisory Committee will have representation from:

- 2 farmers
- Representative of Indiana Association of Conservation Districts
- Representative of IDNR, Soil Conservation Division
- Representative of Purdue Cooperative Extension
- Representative of Indiana Farm Bureau
- Representative of Indiana Commissioner of Agriculture/Indiana Land Resource Council
- Representative of Hoosier Environmental Council
- Representative of The Nature Conservancy
- Representative of Indiana Land Protection Alliance
- Representative of Association of Indiana Counties
- Representative of Indiana Planning Association
- Representative of Indiana Builders Association
- Representative of USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS)

Current Protection Activities in Indiana

The Indiana Farm and Ranch Lands Protection Technical Advisory Committee was established to help protect farmland. To date several Resource Conservation and Development (RC&D) Councils and Land Trust organizations in the state have actively sought donations of conservation easements that in many cases helped protect farmland in the state. The Federal Farm and Ranch Lands Protection Program was established to help protect and slow the loss of farm and ranch land. Indiana participated in the program beginning in 2002.

The Indiana NRCS is in the process of securing easements to protect 652 acres. Working with local sponsoring organizations, the Farm and Ranch Lands Protection Program is being used to help local entities purchase conservation easements to protect Indiana farmland,

Proposed Protection Activities in Indiana

The Indiana Farm and Ranch Lands Protection Technical Advisory Committee (IFRPTAC) long-term goal, working with the Indiana Land Resources Council (ILRC), is to establish a Statewide Farmland Protection Program, which includes the USDA-NRCS Farm and Ranch Lands Protection Program (FRPP) as a component of the total program. Concern about the loss of farmland in the state was one of the main reasons the ILRC was established. Long-term projects of the IFRPTAC include continued improvement of Farm and Ranch Lands Protection ranking criteria, development of funding sources (including state government funds) and development and distribution of outreach materials. The ILRC hopes to identify funding sources, develop state-level program guidelines, and identify other incentives that will attract voluntary landowner participation.

Historically, we do not have an average cost of conservation easements on rural farmland in Indiana. Since Indiana has a high percentage of farmland classified as prime or important we would expect a high volume of farmland acres to be eligible under the federal program. Due to current development pressures and general land values, our average cost for conservation easements is expected to be equal or slightly less than the average in the United States.

FY 2004 Basic Eligibility Requirements

1. Sponsor must represent a local, state, or tribal unit of Government or be a non-governmental organization described in section 501 c (3), 509(a)(2) or 509(a)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986. Organizations must demonstrate their ability, both legally and programmatically to acquire, manage and enforce easements.
2. The primary purpose of the easement must be for the protection of important farmland soils in Indiana and the parcel must include 50% or more of prime and unique farmland, soils of statewide importance and soils of local importance as identified by the NRCS, **or** the parcel must be *listed* on the National or State Register of Historic or Archaeological Sites.
3. The parcel must have a plan addressing land use and Highly Erodible Land (HEL) requirements.
4. The parcel must be of sufficient size to allow for efficient management of the area, have an existing agricultural infrastructure, and have access to markets.
5. There must be a written pending offer for the acquisition of the conservation easement.
6. There must be an appraisal of the property completed by a land appraiser certified in the State of Indiana, or a written estimate of the easement value.
7. Duration of the easement must be permanent.
8. Proposals must be hand delivered to the NRCS State Office, Indianapolis, IN by close of business (4:30pm) on _____, 2004, or be postmarked no later than _____, 2004 to be considered. Requesting 8 copies of the sponsors' proposal.
9. See the Sponsor Application Package 2004 for additional details, guidelines, and instructions.

FY 2004 Proposed Timeline

#	Activity	Dates
1	Indiana NRCS updates the State FRPP plan. The State Conservationist convenes the State Technical Committee for the development of this plan.	Nov. 14
2	Plans are submitted to NRCS at the National level for state allocation decisions.	Nov. 14
3	NRCS at the National level awards state allocations based on quality of State FRPP plans.	When funds become available
4	NRCS at the National level submits a Request for Proposals that is published in the Federal Register.	When funds become available
5	Indiana NRCS receives proposals from sponsors, determines parcel and sponsor eligibility, and ranks eligible parcels.	45 days after the RFP is published
6	Indiana NRCS award funds to sponsors.	Within 60 days after the RFP is published
7	Indiana NRCS and sponsors enter into cooperative agreements.	By end of the current Fiscal Year

Farm and Ranch Lands Protection Program 2004 Funding Request Indiana

Total FRPP funds Requested for FY-2004 (Oct 2003 to Sept 2004)	\$1,460,128.00
Acres of Prime and Important Land to be Protected	560
Dollars expected to be available from government or NGO Farmland Protection Programs in 2004.	\$1,460,128.00
Total acres to be protected in 2004.	1153
Total acres estimated to need protection in the state (cumulative)	1,300,000
Number or acres of Cultural Resource sites to be Protected	
Number	3
Acres	1153
Unfunded application backlog of state, local, tribal, and NGO programs	0
Estimated dollar value	0
Estimated acres	0
Average estimated FRPP Cost/Acre for 2004	\$1,266.00
Potential Cooperating Sponsors for FY 2004	
Degree of Leveraging guaranteed by sponsor: (a) 50 to 35%, (b) 34 to 20%, and (c) less than 20%	
Four Rivers RC&D	a
White River RC&D	a
Sycamore Land Trust	a
Sponsor history of acquiring, managing an holding conservation easements (Number of years)	
Four Rivers RC&D	10
White River RC&D	0
Sycamore Land Trust	2
Farmland protection easement expenditures(\$) in the State in 2003 (excluding FRPP)	0
Four Rivers RC&D	\$50,000.00
White River RC&D	0
Sycamore Land Trust	0
Farmland protection easement donations received in the State in 2003 (\$)	\$100,000.00
Four Rivers RC&D	\$100,000.00
White River RC&D	\$0.00
Sycamore Land Trust	\$0.00
Staff years devoted to farmland protection in the State	
Four Rivers RC&D	0.30
White River RC&D	0.10
Sycamore Land Trust	0.10

Estimated farm or ranch acres protected by sponsors in FY 2004

Four Rivers RC&D	140
White River RC&D	940
Sycamore Land Trust	73

Total	1153
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History of sponsors commitment to conservation planning and implementation.
Choose one or more of the following: (a)none, (b) wildlife habitat, (c) erosion control, (d) nutrient management, (e) pest management, (f) invasive species, (g) water management, (h) air quality (i) all of the above

Four Rivers RC&D	i
White River RC&D	a (goal is i)
Sycamore Land Trust	b

Does the entity require implementation of the conservation plan within a specified time period?

Four Rivers RC&D	yes
White River RC&D	yes
Sycamore Land Trust	yes

Is there a strategic planning approach to protecting farmland in the state (i.e. geographic priority areas are targeted, funds are provided to individuals above or below a specific income, etc.)?

yes

Appendix A: Important Farmland Definitions

There are four different classes or designations of important farmlands

Prime farmland- Prime farmland is land that has the best combination of physical and chemical characteristics for producing food, feed, forage, fiber, and oilseed crops, and is also available for these uses (the land could be cropland, pastureland, rangeland, forest land, or other land, but not urban built-up land or water). It has the soil quality, growing season, and moisture supply needed to economically produce sustained high yields of crops when treated and managed, including water management, according to acceptable farming methods. The specific acceptable ranges of these specific conditions are defined at the national level and details are available from the Natural Resources Conservation Service.

Unique farmland- Unique farmland is land other than prime farmland that is used for the production of specific high value food and fiber crops. It has the special combination of soil characteristics, location, growing season, and moisture supply needed to economically produce sustained high quality and/or high yields of a specific crop when treated and managed according to acceptable farming methods. No such designated soils have been identified and approved in Indiana in this category at this time

Additional farmland of statewide importance- Statewide farmland is land in addition to prime and unique farmlands that is of statewide importance for the production of food, fiber, forage, and oilseed crops. The appropriate state agency or agencies determine criteria for defining and delineating this land. Generally, additional farmland of statewide importance includes those that are nearly prime farmland and that economically produce high yields of crops when treated and managed according to acceptable farming methods. Some may produce as high a yield as prime farmlands if conditions are favorable. Soils in Indiana have been identified, and a list is available from the Natural Resources Conservation Service. Generally, in Indiana, this includes muck & poorly drained sands.

Additional farmland of local importance- In some local areas there is concern for certain additional farmlands for the production of food, feed, fiber, forage, and oilseed crops, even though these lands are not identified as having national or statewide importance. Where appropriate, these lands are to be identified by a local agency or agencies concerned. In places, additional farmlands of local importance may include tracts of land that have been designated for agriculture by local ordinance. No such designated soils have been identified and approved in Indiana in this category at this time



Appendix B: National Resource Inventory Data

National Resources Inventory NRI Data for Indiana Summary Report

Revised December 2000

Table 1- Surface area of federal, nonfederal land & water areas by year

Year	Federal land	Water areas	Nonfederal land			Total surface area
			Developed	Rural	Total	
	1,000 acres					
1982	473.3	347.0	1,834.8	20,503.3	22,338.1	23,158.4
1987	472.3	355.1	1,956.5	20,374.5	22,331.0	23,158.4
1992	473.5	358.6	2,065.1	20,261.2	22,326.3	23,158.4
1997	472.4	356.9	2,260.4	20,068.7	22,329.1	23,158.4

Table 2- Land cover/use of Indiana nonfederal rural land by year

Year	Cropland	CRP land	Pastureland	Forest land	Other rural land	Total rural land
	1,000 acres					
1982	13,780.2	0.0	2,199.9	3,779.3	743.9	20,503.3
1987	13,839.9	143.2	1,914.5	3,793.8	683.1	20,374.5
1992	13,511.7	413.7	1,837.4	3,802.5	695.9	20,261.2
1997	13,407.1	377.6	1,830.0	3,780.5	673.5	20,068.7

Table 3- Prime farmland in Indiana, by land cover/use by year

(does not include statewide important farmland)

Year	Cropland	CRP land	Pastureland	Forest land	Other rural land	Total rural land
1,000 acres						
1982	11,176.0	0.0	936.6	815.7	314.4	13,242.7
1987	11,223.6	64.1	776.4	807.5	289.3	13,160.9
1992	11,046.4	205.4	726.2	807.9	290.1	13,076.0
1997	10,915.7	199.9	742.3	809.2	273.2	12,940.3

Appendix C: Important Farmlands Acreage in Indiana

The following table provides the total acres of important farmland soils in each county in Indiana, and the percent of the total land area occupied by these soils.

County (or Parts of Counties)	Prime Farm Ac	Statewide Farm Ac	Total IF	Co Total Ac	% IF/Co Total
Adams Co.	212,721	900	213,621	217,555	98%
Allen Co.	388,955	6,703	395,658	422,407	94%
Bartholomew Co. Area	178,897	0	178,897	236,729	76%
Benton Co.	252,840	641	253,481	260,237	97%
Blackford & Jay Co.	237,836	865	238,701	351,808	68%
Boone Co.	262,917	0	262,917	270,957	97%
Brown & Part of Bartholomew Co.	28,575	0	28,575	228,090	13%
Carroll Co.	210,069	964	211,033	239,993	88%
Cass Co.	197,390	5,069	202,459	265,517	76%
Clark & Floyd Co.	115,290	0	115,290	336,500	34%
Clay Co.	173,811	0	173,811	230,554	75%
Clinton Co.	250,396	353	250,749	259,270	97%
Crawford Co.	34,483	0	34,483	197,523	17%
Daviess Co.	197,651	0	197,651	279,418	71%
Dearborn & Ohio Co.	64,537	0	64,537	252,685	26%
Decatur Co.	197,896	0	197,896	238,816	83%
Dekalb Co.	199,506	7,850	207,356	232,851	89%
Delaware Co.	215,597	1,394	216,991	253,459	86%
Dubois Co.	106,016	0	106,016	278,592	38%
Elkhart Co.	164,091	7,432	171,523	299,635	57%
Fayette & Union Co.	173,213	0	173,213	243,533	71%
Fountain Co.	217,992	0	217,992	254,777	86%
Franklin Co.	115,759	0	115,759	250,176	46%
Fulton Co.	174,720	11,850	186,570	237,709	78%
Gibson Co.	224,440	265	224,705	319,456	70%
Grant Co.	198,461	780	199,241	265,511	75%
Greene Co.	179,865	0	179,865	349,318	51%
Hamilton Co.	238,546	217	238,763	257,638	93%
Hancock Co.	187,260	0	187,260	196,570	95%
Harrison Co.	84,427	0	84,427	311,053	27%
Hendricks Co.	238,267	0	238,267	261,664	91%
Henry Co.	222,550	0	222,550	252,499	88%
Howard Co.	178,354	719	179,073	188,154	95%
Huntington Co.	216,553	413	216,966	248,096	87%
Jackson Co.	201,757	0	201,757	328,819	61%
Jasper Co.	205,065	54,840	259,905	359,321	72%
Jefferson Co.	126,295	0	126,295	232,160	54%
Jennings Co.	147,418	0	147,418	242,278	61%
Johnson Co.	177,801	0	177,801	206,215	86%
Knox Co.	253,995	1,230	255,225	335,488	76%

Kosciusko Co.	232,270	8,885	241,155	354,854	68%
Lagrange Co.	105,987	5,990	111,977	247,559	45%
Lake Co.	207,083	22,892	229,975	323,456	71%
Laporte Co.	244,581	22,555	267,136	386,688	69%
Lawrence Co.	73,013	0	73,013	289,395	25%
Madison Co.	268,334	780	269,114	289,811	93%
Marion Co.	170,171	0	170,171	257,818	66%
Marshall Co.	210,206	20,094	230,300	287,885	80%
Martin Co.	51,730	0	51,730	217,888	24%
Miami Co.	200,589	5,108	205,697	241,440	85%
Monroe Co.	58,227	0	58,227	263,206	22%
Montgomery Co.	282,277	472	282,749	323,520	87%
Morgan Co.	156,594	0	156,594	261,914	60%
Newton Co.	150,037	60,010	210,047	258,080	81%
Noble Co.	178,957	9,930	188,887	267,123	71%
Orange Co.	63,775	0	63,775	261,376	24%
Owen Co.	109,239	0	109,239	248,224	44%
Parke Co.	180,433	0	180,433	287,917	63%
Perry Co.	41,100	0	41,100	246,886	17%
Pike Co.	104,300	0	104,300	218,407	48%
Porter Co.	189,422	5,572	194,994	268,390	73%
Posey Co.	193,403	0	193,403	268,275	72%
Pulaski Co.	111,385	68,002	179,387	278,106	65%
Putnam Co.	205,992	0	205,992	309,100	67%
Randolph Co.	273,823	0	273,823	290,253	94%
Ripley & Part of Jennings Co.	194,121	0	194,121	294,591	66%
Rush Co.	242,955	0	242,955	261,267	93%
Scott Co.	76,648	0	76,648	123,341	62%
Shelby Co.	236,258	0	236,258	264,012	89%
Spencer Co.	155,465	0	155,465	256,295	61%
St. Joseph Co.	162,221	29,264	191,485	295,424	65%
Starke Co.	30,203	61,811	92,014	199,699	46%
Steuben Co.	103,942	10,180	114,122	206,438	55%
Sullivan Co.	198,620	0	198,620	290,343	68%
Switzerl& Co.	32,520	0	32,520	143,104	23%
Tippecanoe Co.	263,962	1,170	265,132	321,977	82%
Tipton Co.	165,480	256	165,736	166,682	99%
Vanderburgh Co.	112,428	0	112,428	151,123	74%
Vermillion Co.	130,223	220	130,443	166,413	78%
Vigo Co.	193,398	0	193,398	262,809	74%
Wabash Co.	193,744	2,360	196,104	269,504	73%
Warren Co.	192,427	720	193,147	234,413	82%
Warrick Co.	141,596	0	141,596	250,406	57%
Washington Co.	136,230	0	136,230	330,624	41%
Wayne Co.	185,035	0	185,035	258,682	72%
Wells Co.	225,456	150	225,606	236,928	95%
White Co.	255,366	19,892	275,258	325,536	85%
Whitley Co.	151,750	6,646	158,396	216,211	73%
TOTALS	15,295,188	465,444	15,760,632	23,166,424	68%

Note this chart represents acres of important farmland soils in each county, not current land use. Prime & statewide farmlands are totaled in this chart. Unique & local important farmlands have not currently been identified in any community in the state. All these lands are referred to here as Important Farmlands (IF)